In another decision of 7 February [dec. 19/23], the Council, expressing concern at the serious erosion of UNEP’s resource base of voluntary contributions to the Fund and its predictability, asked the Executive Director to explore, in consultation with Governments, ways to secure a stable, adequate and predictable funding for UNEP in the future, and to report thereon in 1999.

By another decision [dec. 19/26], the Council took note of ACABQ’s observations on the report of the Board of Auditors on the Fund’s 1994-1995 financial report and audited financial statements [A/51/533] and of the Executive Director’s comments thereon [UNEP/GC.19/33]. It asked the Executive Director to implement the functions within UNEP’s purview recommended for corrective action, before the end of the 1996-1997 biennium, and to report on the results in 1999.

Trust funds

On 7 February [dec. 19/24 A], the Council approved the establishment of 10 trust funds for specific activities and extended six others. It approved the extension of a further 22 trust funds subject to UNEP receiving requests to do so from the relevant Governments or contracting parties.

Taking note of the Executive Director’s report on the cost of administering trust funds [UNEP/GC.19/18], the Council, on 7 February [dec. 19/24 B], asked her to identify the full administrative and management costs incurred by the individual trust funds and UNEP. She was also asked: to issue a summary report including a description of the major activities carried out by the programmatic trust funds, indicating also the infrastructure required by UNEP to manage and administer the funds; to provide the Governing Council biannually with a list of each fund’s donors and the amounts that they contributed; to provide information on UNEP and UNON activities related to the programming, administration and management of funds; and to ensure the expeditious servicing of all programmatic units covered by trust funds. The Council decided to hold a full discussion in 1999 on the roles of the Executive Director and the Council.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 June [meeting 102], the General Assembly adopted resolution 51/238 without vote [agenda item 97 (a)].

Use of the Special Voluntary Fund and the Trust Fund established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/188

The General Assembly.

Recalling paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 relating to a special voluntary fund to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiation process of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.

Recalling also paragraph 13 of its resolution 47/188 and paragraph 8 of resolution 50/112 of 20 December 1995 relating to the possibility of using the Trust Fund to support the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Committee.

Recalling further paragraph 13 (b) of its resolution 51/180 of 16 December 1996 concerning the maintenance of arrangements relating to extrabudgetary funds,

Noting with pleasure the entry into force on 26 December 1996 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa,

1. Decides that the head of the interim secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, shall have the possibility of using the Special Voluntary Fund, as appropriate, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

2. Decides also that the head of the interim secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, shall have the possibility of using the Trust Fund, as appropriate, to support the participation of representatives of non-governmental organizations in the work of the first session of the Conference of the Parties.

Financial rules

In a 7 February decision [dec. 19/25], the Governing Council, taking note of the Executive Director’s report containing proposals for a revision of the Financial Rules of the UNEP Fund and of the General Procedures Governing the Operations of the Fund [UNEP/GC.19/3], approved a series of revisions to the Rules and to the General Procedures. It asked the Executive Director to consult UN financial authorities and other related UN programmes and agencies on the comprehensive review of the financial rules of UNEP and to report thereon in 1999.

General aspects

UNCED follow-up

During the year, follow-up action to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) [YUN 1992, p. 670] was taken by the General Assembly, which held a special session to review and appraise the implementa-